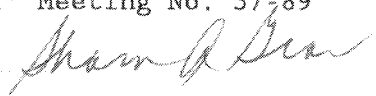


APPROVED: Meeting No. 37-89

ATTEST: 

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
Meeting No. 35-89

July 19, 1989

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, convened in Worksession in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, Maryland Avenue at Vinson Street, Rockville, Maryland, on July 19, 1989, at 7:38 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Douglas M. Duncan

Councilmember Steve Abrams

Councilmember James Coyle

Councilmember David Robbins

ABSENT

Councilmember Viola Hovsepian

In attendance: City Manager Bruce Romer, City Clerk Sharon Gran and City Attorney Paul Glasgow.

Re: Worksession with Sign Review
Board; Town Center
Roundtable Subcommittee

Douglas Worthing, Chairman, Donald Johnson and Leo Stein of the Sign Review Board and Michael Wolff, Chairman of the Town Center Roundtable Subcommittee, discussed the following issues with the Mayor and Council.

1. Building identification signs. Amendments to Section 3-610(a)(4) of the Ordinance were reviewed, and it was agreed that staff would prepare recommendations for the Mayor and Council.

2. Exterior signage. Councilmember Abrams noted problems with the procedure set forth in Section 3-610(a) and suggested that the jurisdiction of the Sign Review Board be raised to the level of the Mayor and Council in extraordinary cases.

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3. Freestanding monument signs in the Town Center Zone. Regarding the recommendation that one freestanding non-illuminated monument sign be permitted per lot, Councilmember Abrams stated that Montgomery County is trying to eliminate such signs in its ordinance. It was clarified, however, that these signs would be more pedestrian in nature, with a maximum height of 10 feet.

4. Temporary Signs. Mr. Worthing noted that their recommendations provide a procedure where people would know what is permitted. The Mayor and Council agreed with the recommended changes to Sections 3-610(e)(1)(B), 3-610(e)(2) and 3-610(e)(3) regarding sale and lease signs, grand opening banners and construction signs, respectively. Creation of a separate category for temporary signs was discussed.

5. Freestanding signs in the I-3 Zone. Proposed amendments to Section 3-609(b) were approved to expand to four the number of tenant identifications permitted on a freestanding sign in the I-3 Zone, but only at the landlord's option. With respect to the requirements for freestanding signs on Rockville Pike, Mr. Worthing noted that they should be more stringent and that the Sign Review Board believes they should be eliminated altogether.

6. Modification to Sign Review Board Rules and Procedures, Section II, to permit variances to some "prohibited" signs. Councilmember Abrams commented that some signs should remain prohibited and that those permitted with a variance should be delineated.

7. Regulation of illuminated signs. It was agreed that a study would be undertaken with respect to limiting the amount of illumination emanating from signs.

8. A recommendation was to be added to the proposed amendments providing for freestanding signs on property which is being leased from another property owner.

A draft text amendment incorporating these proposed changes is to be prepared for introduction at a future Mayor Council meeting.

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Re: Worksession with
Planning Commission

Chairperson James Vitol and Commission Members Gloria Atlas, Jeryl Gegan, Glennon Harrison and Yolande Langbehn discussed the following issues with the Mayor and Council:

A. Standard Traffic Methodology

Staff provided an introduction regarding the Standard Traffic Methodology used in the City. It was noted that perhaps significant changes in the Standard Traffic Methodology should be reviewed by the Traffic and Transportation Commission, the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council. Those deviations of a minor technical nature could be handled in-house with the City Manager's approval.

Discussion ensued as to the addition of adequate public facilities in the Use Permit Review process and the definition of adequacy of public facilities being addressed at the zoning level.

Regarding application of the standards in the downtown area, it was stated that the zoning envelope in the Town Center exceeds the infrastructure capacity of the streets; that there should be a mechanism to deal with downtown projects which are going to cause serious traffic problems since there is no legal basis for not approving them. Concern was expressed with regard to what are unacceptable traffic levels in the downtown area and the compatibility of the pedestrian friendly concept without traffic standards.

Staff's recommendations regarding the imposition of impact fees were discussed. It was noted that the inadequate infrastructure can be dealt with through mitigation and that a number of projects can be undertaken in a larger geographical area to ease traffic downtown. Staff was requested by Mayor Duncan to prepare a list of possible projects for mitigation of the downtown traffic.

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Ms. Langbehn stated that she would like to see the Standard Traffic Methodology applied throughout the City and in Town Center; that she feels something needs to be done now to plan ahead. Staff noted that there is a great deal of uncertainty involved, and the traffic patterns are difficult to predict given today's environment. Whether the improvements on I-270 would provide relief in the future was also discussed.

Mayor Duncan stated that staff should apply Standard Traffic Methodology differently in Town Center than in other areas and that the Mayor and Council need to review the study of impact fees and come back with recommendations. He also indicated that the Planning Commission needs to adopt the STM Administrative Guidelines. Mayor Duncan noted that acceptable levels and unacceptable levels should be defined in order to insure that the City does not allow unacceptable levels.

Regarding the impact fees, it was noted by staff that an economics consultant would be brought in and that it would probably be six months before the recommendations were complete. Mr. Romer indicated that there are other methods that can be utilized in the interim to deal with projects such as the Wire Hardware proposal.

B. West End Plan

In view of the pending application for rezoning at 14 Beall Avenue, Mayor Duncan asked the City Attorney what could be discussed with respect to the recommendations in the West End Plan. Mr. Glasgow advised that they were free to discuss all properties within the planning area since the meeting was not to elicit additional testimony, but to hear from the Planning Commission.

Mr. Vitol indicated the Commission was unanimous in its approval of the Plan; however, there are some areas in which each member felt he or she was in the minority. Mrs. Atlas noted that with respect to 14 and 16 Beall Avenue she felt that

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the properties should be zoned O-2 rather than R-60 as the plan recommends.

Mr. Harrison addressed the issue of bikepaths. In addition to being well signed, as much separation as possible should be provided.

Ms. Langbehn noted that 14 and 16 Beall Avenue should remain residential in order to preserve the housing stock in the City. She also expressed concern about the safety of bikepaths, especially on Martins Lane. Regarding the streets in the West End, she expressed concern that if the streets are widened, it will encourage more traffic.

Councilmember Abrams asked if the planning area extends to Town Center and if a grocery store could be located in the TCO-1 Zone; retention of a grocery store should be reviewed prior to approval of the plan. Staff explained that what had occurred on the west side of North Washington Street is that certain types of activity were desired and the Zoning Ordinance was built around that. All of the TCO-1 Zone could be looked at in terms of options or other alternatives to further the purposes of the urban design plan.

Mr. Gegan noted his opposition to the recommendations for 14 and 16 Beall Avenue. Additionally, regarding the bikepath on Martins Lane, he felt that mixing traffic with bike traffic was not a good idea; that Welsh Park could be used as a cut-through as an alternative.

Mr. Vitol noted that on page 18 of the Plan, regarding the single-family townhouses, there should be a specific item included in the Plan which overrules the Town Center Plan and moves the townhouse area back to where it currently exists. In response to Councilmember Abrams' question as to the acreage left over, Mr. Vitol responded 4 to 5 acres.

Regarding traffic access set forth on page 27 of the Plan, it was noted that the secondary entrances option would open it up to a lot of traffic through the

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neighborhood (Calvert Road) and that the last two sentences should be deleted.

Finally, it was mentioned that Beall Avenue should be changed to a secondary residential route.

Mr. Harrison requested that the names of the Neighborhood Planning Area Group members be added to the Plan.

Mayor Duncan indicated that the West End Plan should be placed on the Mayor and Council agenda of August 7 for discussion and instructions to staff.

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:13 p.m., to convene again in General Session at 7:30 p.m. on July 24, 1989, or at the call of the Mayor.